

# Challenges and Callings of the End Times

## Part 2

In the second part of this talk, I would like to speak about the Early Church teachings as one of the most important callings of the End Times. By this, I do not mean that the Early Church or the Early Fathers' teachings are the *only* important calling of the End Times, but that they are *among* the most important callings. I mentioned earlier that there are new and special callings that will be released for the End Time battle. According to what I have received from the Lord, my conviction is that going back to the Early Church teachings is very important and essential for the battle of the End Times.

I can put this in one short phrase as follows:

*“All the problems of the End Time Church have their answers and solutions in the Early Time Church.”*

→ Jer 6:16

(N.B.) The resources were buried and guarded [as what happened with the body of Jesus *see Matthew 27:62-67.*] It takes a battle of faith to recover them.

I would like to share with you **five main points** that highlight why going back to the Early Church teachings is very important in the End Times as a calling that will help in that battle.

### 1. The Foundational Apostolic Church/Calling

Due to the various confrontations and difficulties that the Church faced over the centuries, which we have seen throughout the history of the Church, the Church slumbered then woke up and then slumbered again and woke up and so on.

The Holy Spirit has special ways to help the Church wake up. To wake up the Church, the Holy Spirit usually pours a certain special outpouring that would shake the whole Body of Christ.

However, because of our weakness, this outpouring of the Spirit that aims at waking up the Church has unfortunately caused the formation of new denominations leading to new divisions. For example, the Holy Spirit may pour a special hunger for the Word of God and for going deeper in the prophecies of the Scriptures. This should bring more light, more teaching, and various special spiritual foods from the Word of God. It usually starts very genuine, yet, over time, it becomes a certain denomination that focuses on such aspects. Other denominations then begin to go against this denomination in a negative way. Because of this conflict in the Body of Christ, the Church slumbers again. Then, the Holy Spirit comes with another special outpouring to wake up the Church with, for example, the gifts of the Spirit. As a result of this special outpouring, a wide living wave flows in the whole Body of Christ causing new zeal, new life and all these sorts of things. Yet, shortly thereafter a new denomination is formed causing a lot of conflict, confrontation and negative things. This goes on and on in such a way.

The Holy Spirit will continue to pour out new life and new gifts to wake up the Church and will never stop.

However, there is a very delicate point here to which we need to pay attention:

Throughout the walk of the Church, as the Church slumbered, the Church usually drifted away from the path somehow. The Church then woke up with a new wave and a new zeal, yet no one looked back to see to what degree the Church had drifted, but rather continued with the new wave and new zeal. The story explained above was repeated several times; sleep took place again and then another wave to wake up the Church came and so on and so forth.

Here is the important question: **Is the path in which the Church is moving aligned with the foundation of the Apostles, or has something pushed and drifted the Church here and there?**

The re-alignment with the apostolic thinking is so essential.

How can this happen?

This can happen by going back to the Early Church teaching as a checkpoint for our current convictions and the point we have reached.

To clarify, let me give you a physical life example. These days we less frequently use natural foods, natural vegetables, and natural fruits and so on. We have a lot of processed foods; a lot of changes have taken place in the nutritional aspect. Of course, this affects the physiology of the body. For example, it can affect blood pressure where nowadays we notice that human blood pressure can rise to different levels than normal. In medicine, we learned that the normal range of blood pressure should be around 120 over 80. These days, because of what we eat and do, one may go to the doctor to check his blood pressure and find it 200 over 120 for example. The doctor will thus tell that person that he has a problem in his blood pressure. This person will ask: “Why?” The doctor will explain that there is a checkpoint against which they check the blood pressure. They have checked that person’s blood pressure in relation to what it should be and have found a difference between that person’s actual blood pressure and what it should be. That person’s blood pressure therefore needs to be re-aligned and re-adjusted to the normal level; otherwise, more problems may affect his health. The doctor thus puts him on a special regime and gives him some medications to correct the situation.

Similarly, if we check what is happening today in the Body of Christ against the early teachings of the Church, we shall find some differences. Of course, we can never deny the new outpouring of the Spirit and the richness of that because this was actually the plan of the Spirit by which to wake up the Church. Yet, at the same time, we need to be quite aware that because of the weaknesses of denominational divisions, something has been added that needs to be checked against the foundational apostolic thinking in order to stick to the original outpouring and push away what was added. This can never be done without the checkpoint measure which is the *“Early Apostolic Church.”*

It is true that the wonderful outpouring of the Spirit adds new things to the Body of Christ, yet this must be aligned with the foundational apostolic thinking and teaching.

You may say: “Yes, of course, this is already happening; we check everything against the Word of God. Why then have divisions taken place?”

Divisions actually took place because every sector of the Church began to see the Word of God in his own way. It is the same Word of God, yet every sector explains and understands it in a

different way. However, the Early Church teaches us how they understood the Word of God in the era that immediately followed the Apostolic Era.

It is very important to know, and always remember, that the Church of God all over the world in the East and West, continued in this one faith for four full centuries. Not *one* hundred years, but *four* hundred years. This one faith prevailed in the East and West despite all the differences in cultures, different ways of worship and different liturgies. They had one faith and one understanding of all the principles of the Bible because they were deeply connected to the apostolic way of thinking. But then, divisions began and everyone started thinking that each had the full truth. This is actually the big lie caused by the Darkness that entered as a result of our sin of division.

Division is a sin that has consequences. It results in bringing about more darkness, so, every sector of the Church began to see Christ from just one angle. Therefore, we so need to go back to the Early Church to see how they understood *all* the main topics of faith.

As an example, it is documented that the Early Church continued for a long time to pray the Psalms –in the way you may have seen in this community. They prayed the Book of Psalms in a special way with prostrations. They must have had a certain conviction in this respect; they actually knew that this feeds the spirit.

However, throughout the centuries, different ways of prayer were introduced in the Church, all of which are blessed and are ways of expressing one's faith and love to the Lord. Yet, while one is taking in and embracing the different ways of worship that were introduced into the Church over the centuries, one must also be realigned to the original picture because its purpose is to fill and feed the spirit.

According to the repeated story of the Enemy, the Enemy may come and whisper in our ears saying: *"You can't put these different ways of prayer together; why do you want to go back to these old ways? Don't be retarded spiritually; invent new ways."*

One has to be realigned with the worship of the Early Church and at the same time there is nothing that can hinder the Believer from embracing different ways of expressing his faith in prayer.

If we perceive and understand this principle properly, we will know that we cannot do without this picture of prayer of the Early Church because it feeds our spirits. But, at the same time, we also need other means to receive prophetic input and to feel comforted and directed in ministry and so on.

There is no time to explain the differences now, but the highlights mentioned above need to be considered.

## **2. Bringing the Mind and the Heart Together**

The Early Church focused so much on the inner perception and reception of spiritual things.

You may be familiar with the theological movement that appeared in Europe in the Middle Ages known as the “*Enlightenment Movement*” which maintained that anything that is not understood by the mind should be ignored and neglected.

How sad! How sorrowful!

It is a very sad and sorrowful thing because it simply means that we have put God and His special revelations in a small box; one’s mind is a small box. God has created us in a special way giving us a heart that can embrace unlimited things and a mind that is so limited to help us and protect us from going astray.

I will give you a very important example in this context:

We all know that nowadays Bible studies and Bible courses usually follow certain steps where one reads the chapter or the passage of the Bible to be studied and then tries to discover a promise, a warning, or anything else that one notices in that chapter. After that, one understands what he noticed. By this, the truth has reached one’s mind and one has then to apply it in his life;

it has to move from the mind to the inner life (*i.e.* to the heart) so that one can grow. Isn't this what you are all familiar with?

This method, however, is completely contradictory to the biblical teaching. I will give you two references as an example to clarify this.

*“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.”* **John 1:4**

The Apostle states here that life comes first, followed by light. Our current teaching –on the other hand –suggests that light comes first, then followed by life. We believe that we should understand first so that the light comes and then we apply what we understand in order to change our conduct. After we are changed, life will flow. This means that we follow the principle of light then life; whereas, Apostle John says that life comes first then light.

Do you know why it is necessary to be so, as Apostle John states?

It is because every truth in the Word of God is actually a deep revelation; it is the mind of God and hence I cannot put it in my mind; it is much wider. But, if I receive the biblical truth and revelation in my heart, the Holy Spirit takes it from my heart to enlighten my mind according to the caliber of my mind. In such a way, I receive the part of light that suits me. We are all very different in our thinking, cultures, and backgrounds, and all these things affect our minds. When one receives the measure of light that suits him, he can follow it and obey it easily.

I want to remind you that quite often we receive things and take them seriously and try to apply them, but we fail and say: “We are not able to do that.” This happens because we do not follow the biblical principal: we need to receive the truth by faith in our hearts as life first and then wait for the Holy Spirit to reveal it in due time as light. The measure of light will then be very suitable for the person and will push him and take him through.

Another reference in this context:

*“Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.”* **Psalms 119: 34**

I mentioned above that the current teaching focuses on noticing something in the Scriptures, accepting it, and then understanding it. We follow the steps of “*noticing (observing)*” then “*understanding*”. Yet, the above verse says: “*enable me to understand that I may be able to observe*” and hence highlighting that “*understanding*” comes before “*observing.*”

This may appear very challenging to our mind at first, and we may wonder how this can happen.

Actually the “*noticing*” which we are called to see is not merely about having thoughts. When the Lord enables our mind to understand, we will be able to collect the treasure resulting from understanding *i.e.* the hidden jewel and revelation. One can then say: “Lord, I got it.” This will in turn help one to obey as well.

The Gospel of Luke states that after the resurrection Jesus opened the minds of the disciples. Our minds actually have a lot of darkness and we need the Spirit to open our minds so that we can notice these things.

### **3. The Early Church lived a lifestyle that flowed throughout all the days of their lives as one stream without interruption, where they always had zeal for Christ’s Return, together with bridal love, humility, and purity.**

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians tells us that, at that time, people began to abandon their jobs believing that the Lord was about to come. In this Epistle, Paul was correcting them. They had a zeal that was eating them up and they were getting ready at any cost for the sake of being prepared for His Second Coming. These were not words or songs, but an actual leaving of everything behind in order to focus on being truly ready and prepared as a Bride. In the Early Church writings, this is described as “*Bridal Love.*” Today, we rarely hear this term because it is almost lost from the experience of the Body of Christ.

Bridal love is a very special love. The love between a bride and bridegroom is not at all like the love between a father and his son or between friends. There are different kinds of love. Bridal love is so special that when the bride has this kind of love, it is a sign of being ready for the coming of the bridegroom.

The Early Church knew that the Bridegroom is holy and thus they kept themselves really holy, pure and could not touch anything that would defile them.

Do you remember the story of Daniel during the time of the Exile?

Daniel was not alone in the Exile; there were many people with him. Why was the king's servant terrified when Daniel asked him to allow him *not* to eat the food of the king as though Daniel was asking something strange? It is because all the other Israelites who were in the Exile ate from this food; they gave excuses to themselves saying: "There is nothing that we can do; it is out of our hands; we are ready to eat anything because we are in exile." The leaders in charge, in the Emperor's palace, saw everyone eating and then all of a sudden, Daniel came up with a different strange idea saying:

*"I can't eat this; this will defile me; I am for my Lord; I can't touch any defiled thing even in exile."*

The Early Church lived as such. They were always ready for the cost. Because of this kind of lifestyle, history tells us about thousands and thousands of martyrs.

Nowadays, we compromise and have our excuses. We say: *"There is nothing we can do."*

However, there still are some Daniels who will say *"We will never be defiled."*

What is the secret behind this?

The Early Church knew how to feed their spirits. When the spirit grows, it leads the whole being of the person in this path (described above).

These days, our spirits are weak and are not growing, so, we are lead instead by our intellect, our convictions and the situations around us. Hence, we can not walk consistently all the days in such a manner of life.

#### **4. Blocking the Plans of the Devil**

The Early Church calling is important because it blocks the plans of the Devil, especially those plans related to Christ's Second Coming as the King to reign.

The Bible tells us that Jesus will come as a Bridegroom and as a King. Christ's return as a "*Bridegroom*" is related to our inner life and this means that we need to be ready and prepared as a Bride for the holy Bridegroom. Christ's coming as a "*King*" means that we have to prepare the scene and the whole atmosphere for His reign.

There are some important verses in the Bible that speak about the way He will come again. Unfortunately, this is again one of the principals that is missing from the current teachings of the Church. The Bible refers to the Lord's Coming, saying:

*"Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You."* **Zechariah 14:5**

The above reference highlights that He will come with His saints. This is a reference from the Old Testament.

Let us look at another reference from the New Testament:

*"...when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed..."* **2 Thessalonians 1:10**

The same thing is repeated in this reference; He will come with His saints.

Here lies a very important principal –which I will not explain in detail here because there is no time and to avoid distraction –but, I can simply put it in the following words so that we may be aware of it:

*Jesus cannot come again without the saints being ready and having prepared everything for His Coming.*

In what ways and in what aspects should the saints be ready?

The saints need to be especially ready in the aspect of lordship *i.e.* regaining Adam's lordship (kingship) over the Earth.

God gave kingship of the Earth to Adam. However, Adam lost it at the Fall and the Devil took it and became the Prince of the World. Jesus regained and restored this to us through His redemptive work. Again, this is one of the possessions that was granted to us in Christ, yet, we need to put it into practice. We need to nullify the kingship of the Devil (as the Prince of the World) and regain our kingship of the earth. When this is achieved, He can then really come. Yet, if we fail to do that, we will be blocking the way for Him to come as King.

Unfortunately, because our minds are not renewed enough, we think that Christ will come as a King with power and will push the Devil away and hence we will be able to raise up our heads and be victorious. Actually, this will never happen; it cannot happen that way!

Jesus said: *"Learn from me for I am meek and humble in heart."* Jesus is humble; He will never change His character. It is true that He will come in a majestic way, yet, He will still be humble; He will never use His Arm of Power as we might think.

Jesus completed everything; we need to regain our kingship so that He can come as *"The King."*

Because of this, the Devil works hard to confuse this issue and make us (the saints) unable to achieve this kingship, so that he may block Christ's coming as the *"King."*

The Early Church's conviction and approach is very important in this context. This is because when the spirit grows, the mind is enlightened and the spirit becomes in control; hence, the person can be king over the territory in which he is called to live.

## **5. The Unity of the Church in Faith**

The Lord will not come to a divided Church or Bride. We all know quite well that we (the Body of Christ) are not one in our convictions and beliefs; different denominations have different convictions. Due to the difficulty and sensitivity of this issue, Christians usually try to overcome

this barrier by saying: “Let us unite in love while each one keeps his faith and convictions to himself.”

In fact, this is merely *a temporary solution for a deeply rooted problem*. However, we still have to deal with the problem whatever it is.

Here is the important question: How can we have one faith and one conviction while having completely different convictions over many topics?

There is no other way we can reach this point except by going back to the Early Church to know how they lived with one conviction and one faith in the East and West for four centuries.

Jesus can never come except when the Bride is truly ready by being One in faith.

*“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...”* **Ephesians 4:11 – 13**

It is so clear here that we need to have one faith; we need to come to the unity of faith. This is clearly linked to reaching *“the full measure of Christ.”* This clearly implies that each one (each sector of the Church) sees Christ from one angle only. As a result, we are divided into sectors. If one is able to embrace other aspects or facets of Christ, one’s understanding of the Person of Christ will increase and one’s picture of Christ will broaden. By doing so, one will be adding to his own conviction the convictions of other sectors of the Body of Christ. One will then realize that when he earlier refused the convictions of others, it was because he was not able to see some parts of Christ’s personality and rather saw only one facet.

In the above verses, Paul states that when Christ was raised, He released five offices in the Church. However, these offices were released for a purpose which we hardly notice. Because of our selfishness, we unfortunately think that these offices are merely callings which we aspire for; each one wants to have one of the highest callings and boast saying: I am an apostle, or, I am a prophet and so on.

However, we cannot separate the offices from their purpose. The offices aim at reaching “*the fullness of Christ and the unity of faith.*” Paul explains the ways and the steps to achieve this. He maintains that when the offices are truly released in their full measure, they will help the saints to grow in understanding the Person of Christ more and more and hence they become united in faith.

Does this happen nowadays? Are denominations disappearing? Are we becoming one again? Do we have unity of faith?

Actually, this is not happening, yet all the time we hear that there is an apostle here and a prophet there and so. If there were apostles and prophets here and there, there must be one church.

I am not trying to say that there are no offices in the Church; we still see some manifestations of the apostolic calling, the prophetic calling and so on in the Church. These offices bless the Church and help the saints to grow; yet, they do not grow to the full measure of Christ or come to the unity of faith because the offices are not yet released in their full measure.

When the offices are released fully, the apostles and prophets will have a revelation of God that will enable the Body of Christ to become united. This revelation will open the eyes to see things which one did not accept before. The revelation will come with authority, light and life and thus everyone will accept it. As a result, we grow more and more, become able to see more of the Person of Christ and hence become united.

Going back to the Early Church teaching will help a lot in releasing the full measure of the offices of the Church. They will be released with a revelation that will enable us to become united.

*The Body of Christ will thus be prepared as one Bride and this in turn will open the way for the King and Bridegroom to come.*

**Amen**

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